

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
WESTERN DIVISION

LINDA TRIETSCH, :
 :
Plaintiff, : Case No. 3:09cv413
 :
vs. : JUDGE WALTER HERBERT RICE
 :
COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY, :
 :
Defendant. :

DECISION AND ENTRY ADOPTING REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE (DOC. #12) IN THEIR ENTIRETY; DEFENDANT'S OBJECTIONS TO SAID JUDICIAL FILING (DOC. #13) OVERRULED; JUDGMENT TO BE ENTERED IN FAVOR OF PLAINTIFF AND AGAINST DEFENDANT COMMISSIONER, VACATING COMMISSIONER'S DECISION THAT PLAINTIFF WAS NOT DISABLED AND, THEREFORE, NOT ENTITLED TO BENEFITS UNDER THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT, AND REMANDING THE CAPTIONED CAUSE TO THE DEFENDANT COMMISSIONER, PURSUANT TO SENTENCE FOUR OF 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), FOR PAYMENT OF BENEFITS CONSISTENT WITH THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT; TERMINATION ENTRY

Plaintiff has brought this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) to review a decision of the Defendant Commissioner denying Plaintiff's application for Social Security disability benefits. On December 1, 2010, the United States Magistrate Judge filed a Report and Recommendations (Doc. #12), recommending that the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act be vacated, and that the captioned cause

be remanded to the Defendant Commissioner, pursuant to Sentence Four of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), for the payment of benefits consistent with the Social Security Act. Based upon reasoning and citations of authority set forth in the Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendations (Doc. #12) and in the Plaintiff's Reply (Doc. #14) to Defendant's Objections to said judicial filing (Doc. #13), as well as upon a thorough de novo review of this Court's file, including the Administrative Transcript (filed with Defendant's Answer at Doc. #5), and a thorough review of the applicable law, this Court adopts the aforesaid Report and Recommendations in their entirety and, in so doing, orders the entry of judgment in favor of the Plaintiff and against the Defendant Commissioner, vacating the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act, and remanding the captioned cause to the Defendant Commissioner, pursuant to Sentence Four of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), for the payment of benefits consistent with the Social Security Act, concluding that the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act was not supported by substantial evidence. The Defendant's Objections to said judicial filing (Doc. #13) are overruled. Accordingly, the decision of the Defendant Commissioner is vacated.

In reviewing the Commissioner's decision, the Magistrate's task is to determine if that decision is supported by "substantial evidence." 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). Under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C), this Court, upon objections being made

to the Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendations, is required to make a de novo review of those recommendations of the report to which objection is made.

This de novo review, in turn, requires this Court to re-examine all the relevant evidence, previously reviewed by the Magistrate, to determine whether the findings of the Secretary [now Commissioner] are supported by "substantial evidence."

Lashley v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 708 F.2d 1048, 1053 (6th Cir.

1983); Gibson v. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, 678 F.2d 653, 654

(6th Cir. 1982). This Court's sole function is to determine whether the record as a

whole contains substantial evidence to support the Commissioner's decision. The

Commissioner's findings must be affirmed if they are supported by "such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion."

Richardson v. Perales, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971), citing Consolidated Edison

Company v. NLRB, 305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938); Landsaw v. Secretary of Health and

Human Services, 803 F.2d 211, 213 (6th Cir. 1986). Substantial evidence means

such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a

conclusion. Richardson, supra, at 401; Ellis v. Schweicker, 739 F.2d 245, 248 (6th

Cir. 1984). Substantial evidence is more than a mere scintilla, but only so much as

would be required to prevent a directed verdict (now judgment as a matter of law)

against the Commissioner if this case were being tried to a jury. Foster v. Bowen,

853 F.2d 483, 486 (6th Cir. 1988); NLRB v. Columbian Enameling and Stamping

Company, 306 U.S. 292, 300 (1939). To be substantial, the evidence "must do

more than create a suspicion of the existence of the fact to be established... [I]t must be enough to justify, if the trial were to a jury, a refusal to direct a verdict when the conclusion sought to be drawn from it is one of fact for the jury."

LeMaster v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 802 F.2d 839, 840 (6th Cir. 1986), quoting NLRB v. Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company, *supra*.

In determining whether the Commissioner's findings are supported by substantial evidence, the Court must consider the record as a whole. Hephner v. Mathews, 574 F.2d 359 (6th Cir. 1978); Ellis, *supra*; Kirk v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 667 F.2d 524, 536 (6th Cir. 1981); Houston v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 736 F.2d 365 (6th Cir. 1984); Garner v. Heckler, 745 F.2d 383 (6th Cir. 1984). However, the Court may not try the case *de novo*, resolve conflicts in evidence or decide questions of credibility. Garner, *supra*. The findings of the Commissioner of Social Security and proceedings on Claimant's application for social security disability benefits are not subject to reversal merely because there exists in the record substantial evidence to support a different conclusion. Buxton v. Halter, Commissioner of Social Security, 246 F.3d 762 (6th Cir. 2001). If the Commissioner's decision is supported by substantial evidence, it must be affirmed, even if the Court as a trier of fact would have arrived at a different conclusion. Elkins v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 658 F.2d 437, 439 (6th Cir. 1981).

In addition to the foregoing, in ruling as aforesaid, this Court makes the following, non-exclusive, observations:

1. The Administrative Law Judge failed to apply the correct legal standards in evaluating the opinion of Dr. Goren as the Regulations and case law require. Accordingly, the hearing officer's reliance on Dr. Goren's opinion to discount that of Dr. Sinha and/or the other longitudinal evidence of record was error.

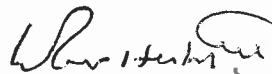
2. In this Court's opinion, pursuant to a review of the entirety of the record, as crystallized by the United States Magistrate Judge in her Report and Recommendations, proof of Plaintiff's disability is overwhelming or, at the very least, proof of her disability is strong, with evidence to the contrary lacking. Accordingly, a remand for an award of benefits, rather than one for further administrative proceedings, is appropriate. Faucher v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 17 F.3d 171, 176 (6th Cir. 1994).

WHEREFORE, based upon the aforesaid, this Court adopts the Report and Recommendations of the United States Magistrate Judge (Doc. #12) in their entirety, having concluded that the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act was based upon an unjustified reliance on the opinion of a non-examining medical expert, reliance had upon a failure to evaluate the opinion of the non-examining medical

expert as required by prevailing Regulations and case law, and unsupported by substantial evidence as well. Defendant's Objections to said judicial filing (Doc. #13) are overruled. Judgment will be ordered entered in favor of the Plaintiff and against the Defendant Commissioner, vacating the decision of the Defendant Commissioner that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act, and remanding the captioned cause to the Defendant Commissioner for an award of benefits consistent with the Social Security Act.

The captioned cause is hereby ordered terminated upon the docket records of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Western Division, at Dayton.

March 30, 2011



WALTER HERBERT RICE, JUDGE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

Copies to:

Counsel of record